

A Wild Compliance

Ben Weaver

I've got maps spread out
all over the kitchen floor
headwaters splintering into deltas
whose braids are hollowing
my spirit of its untruths
the snow blowing down my collar
the rain leaking in through my boots
the river depositing silt into my hair
whittled down to sap
I'm letting the light in
however it wants to get in

Out in the darkness of the frozen lake
there are fish suspended
in the top six inches of ice
who will hold the dreams
of last summer's water
through the winter,
and then pass them along
in the spring when the ice melts
and water again begins to flow

The part of me that is Watercress
Wolverine, Lark Sparrow and Bluestem
has been waking
in the middle of the night
near the fork of a creek
at the foot of a hill
and cannot return to sleep without asking,
how far away are we
and what must we do
to collectively imagine
a liberated future;
where the way we live
does not compromise life
where watersheds are not choked
where human beings
are not wage slaves
and our value system
is based in generosity
not accumulation?

These questions howl through me
like rivers and runaway witches
my life the voice to ask them with
my heart the tool shaping
the resilience and renewal they reveal

As the tamarack bogs never refuse a Moose
my resistance is an act of love
and my questions come not in judgment
but in service of life, as an invitation
to hear all that is silent in the river
all that clings with the burrs and sunset
to the Coyote's tail
that does not require one to
comply with an economy
willing to sacrifice the braids of our ecosystem
Red Fox, Monarch, Hawk,
White Bark Pine, Salmon,
Bears Ears, Lake Superior,
Kawishiwi, Menomonee, or Yellow Dog
for a deluded version of wealth
that enriches supremacy,
fear, complacency, and disconnect,
but instead complies with
the entangled lives of
Box Turtles and thunderstorms
ancient forests and the joy of
Earths' wild reciprocity.